Embedding Interdisciplinary Groups into the Autism Classroom



Prepared By:
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Prepared For:
OTAC 2024 Conference

Objectives



- Learn importance of interdisciplinary approach to improve student outcomes
- Discover ways to create sustainable program
- Gain tools to build collaborative model in school setting



Multidisciplinary versus Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Multidisciplinary

Different disciplines working *independently* on various aspects of a project, or student educational plan

Interdisciplinary

Different disciplines working *together* on the same project or student education plan



Collin, 2009

An interdisciplinary team can be defined as a group of professionals, ideally at the same hierarchical level, working together to achieve common goals



Interdisciplinary Team

Birkeland et. al, 2017

Interdisciplinary Pilot Program Development



Four Point Blueprint



Needs Assessment

OT and SLP identified a need for increased interdisciplinary opportunities in LRE



Development

Knowledge-to-Action (KTA) Framework



Design

Monthly group design related to structure, themes, duration, frequncy and scheduling



Collaboration

Improved opportunities for therapists, teachers and classroom staff to learn from each other

Straus et al., 2009

Four Point Blueprint



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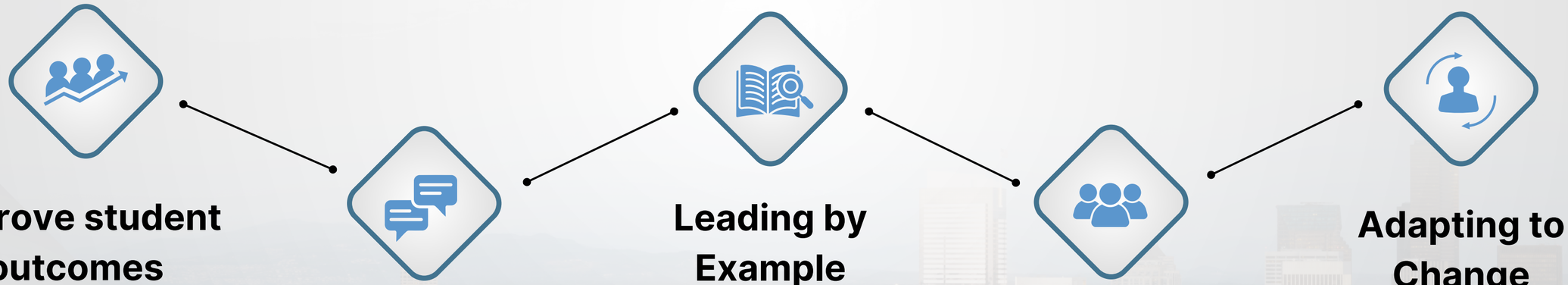


Collaboration

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Straus et al., 2009

Needs Assessment



01

Improve Student Outcomes

- Determine useful shareholders
  - OT, SLP, Teacher, School Psychologist, APE, PT, Aides, Administration
- Determine targeted outcomes
- Start the conversation
- Review available research



02

Communication and Influence

- How do we communicate withe everyone
  - Set up baseline expectations on mode and intervals
- What is best for everyone to influence each other
  - Will vary for every team





03

Leading by Example



- OTs possess unique abilities to be the chameleon on teams in school based setting
- OTs are able to adapt to various teams and environments
- This is part of our ‘tool box’

04

Incorporate Interdisciplinary Aspects

- Ensure all unique skills sets are incorporated from each shareholder





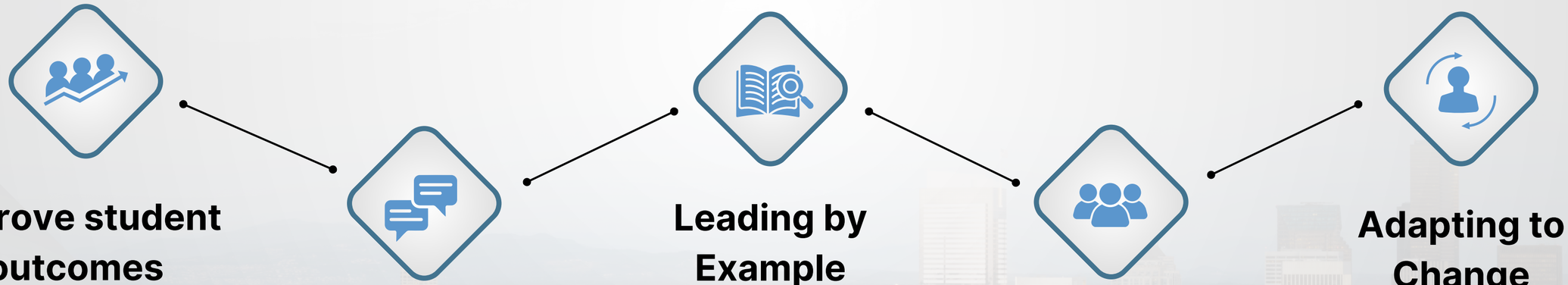
05

Adapting to Change

- Change is our only constant
- Programs need to possess resiliency and sustainability



Needs Assessment



Four Point Blueprint

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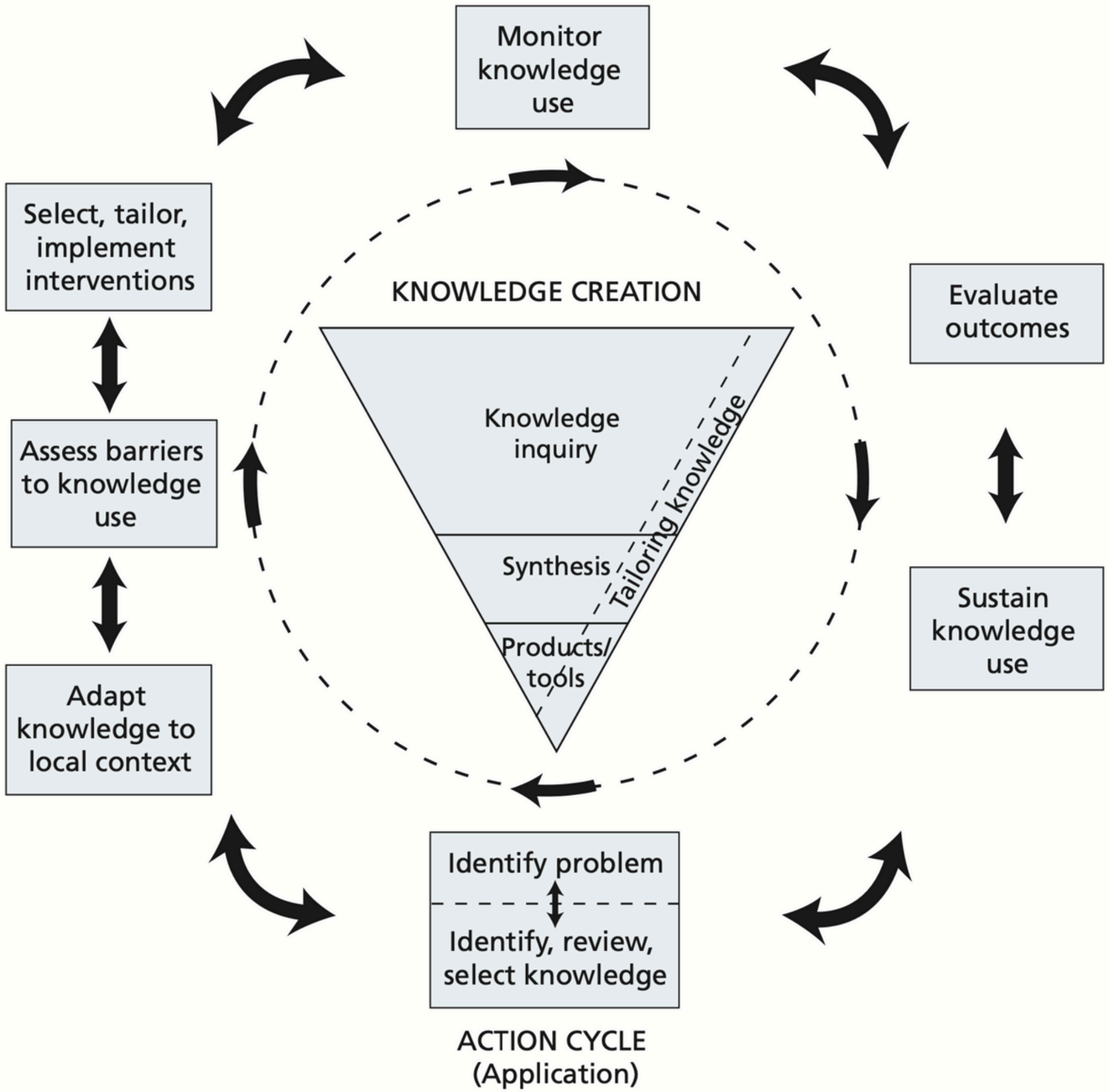
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Straus et al., 2009

Development

Knowledge-to-Action (KTA) Framework

- Implementation framework
- Evidence-based practice
  - best available research
  - clinical expertise
  - client preference
- Knowledge creation phase before expanding to action cycle



Straus et al., 2009

Four Point Blueprint



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Straus et al., 2009

Design

Embedded Groups

- 1 elementary site
- 6 classrooms, Autism-centered, K-5
- Group timeframe: August-May
- Classroom embedded groups: once per month
- Group time: 45 minutes, 30 minutes





- Theme-based groups
- Activation activity
- Simultaneous OT group and Speech group
- Visual motor/sequencing activity

Sample Group Structure

Theme: Springtime Flowers and Bugs		
	Objectives: OT	Objectives: Speech
Warm up Activity: Springtime Dance	Imitating actions Motor planning skills Alerting activity	Imitating actions Following directions Joint attention
Group 1: Bug Hunt with Flyswatter	Organizing body to midline Visual motor skills/visual scanning Proprioceptive input to hands/arms	Follow directions Describing items (big/small) Requesting
Group 2: Build a Flower Garden	Visual scanning Attention to task Fine motor-grasping	Receptive vocabulary Matching/sorting colors CORE WORDS: more, up, on Describing: size, color, shape Expressive vocabulary: garden vocabulary, expanding utterance
Fine Motor Project: Ladybug Plates	Bilateral task Visual motor task Motor planning-multi-step, copying from a model Fine motor precision	Labeling actions: cutting/writing/opening Describing: colors/size





Four Point Blueprint



Needs Assessment

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Collaboration

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Straus et al., 2009

Collaboration



Collaboration Opportunities

- Provide teachers group objectives, reminder emails
- Questions during groups from teachers and staff
- Debriefing after groups (OT/SLP and teacher)
- Modeling during groups
- Alternating monthly teacher Google forms (5 questions)
- Informal collaboration between teachers and related service providers (OT/SLP)-frequently
- OT and SLP: structured monthly meetings

Four Point Blueprint



Needs Assessment

Include all parts to strengthen next steps of development



Development

Research phase to clinical practice



Design

Monthly group design based on program needs



Collaboration

Improved opportunities for therapists, teachers and classroom staff to learn from each other and use available resources

Straus et al., 2009

Group Activity

Putting it all together

Break into groups of 4- 2 OTs, 2 SLPs
Your Goal: create a 45 minute embedded group that includes an activation activity, 2 small groups (OT/Speech) and visual motor activity with objectives for each part.

- Scenario: K-1st grade Autism classroom, 8 students, 1 teacher, 2 aides, 1 OT, 1 SLP
- Teacher Input: Fall theme, working on copying prewriting shapes and naming shapes from pictures
- Classroom environment: Appropriate sized classroom furniture, standard classroom supplies (pencils, scissors, blocks, play-doh, paper, fine motor manipulatives) 3 padded floor mats, 2 yoga balls and 4 wiggle cushions





Please be ready to share out!!

Group Activity

Theme: Springtime Flowers and Bugs		
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Warm up Activity: Springtime Dance	Imitating actions Motor planning skills Alerting activity	Imitating actions Following directions Joint attention
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Live Group Activity		
Theme: **FALL/Autumn**		
	Objective: OT	Objective: Speech
Activation Activity:		
Group 1: OT		
Group 2: Speech		
Fine Motor Sequencing Activity		

- Scenario: K-1st grade Autism classroom, 8 students, 1 teacher, 2 aides
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Your Goal: create a 45 minute embedded group that includes a theme, activation activity, 2 small groups and visual motor activity with objectives for each part.

Please be ready to share out!!

Share your Ideas

- Theme: FALL
- Activation Activity
- OT Group
- Speech Group
- Visual Motor Activity



Outcomes of Pilot Program

- Capacity building
- Increased awareness of student's sensory needs by teachers, aides and SLP staff
- Student transitions between activities in the classroom with fewer maladaptive behaviors observed
- Understanding of therapeutic prompting by classroom staff through modeling by OT and SLP
- Team communication and collaboration
- Using classroom materials in new ways

Lynch et al., 2023

What did we learn today

- Learn importance of interdisciplinary approach to improve student outcomes
- Discover ways to create sustainable program
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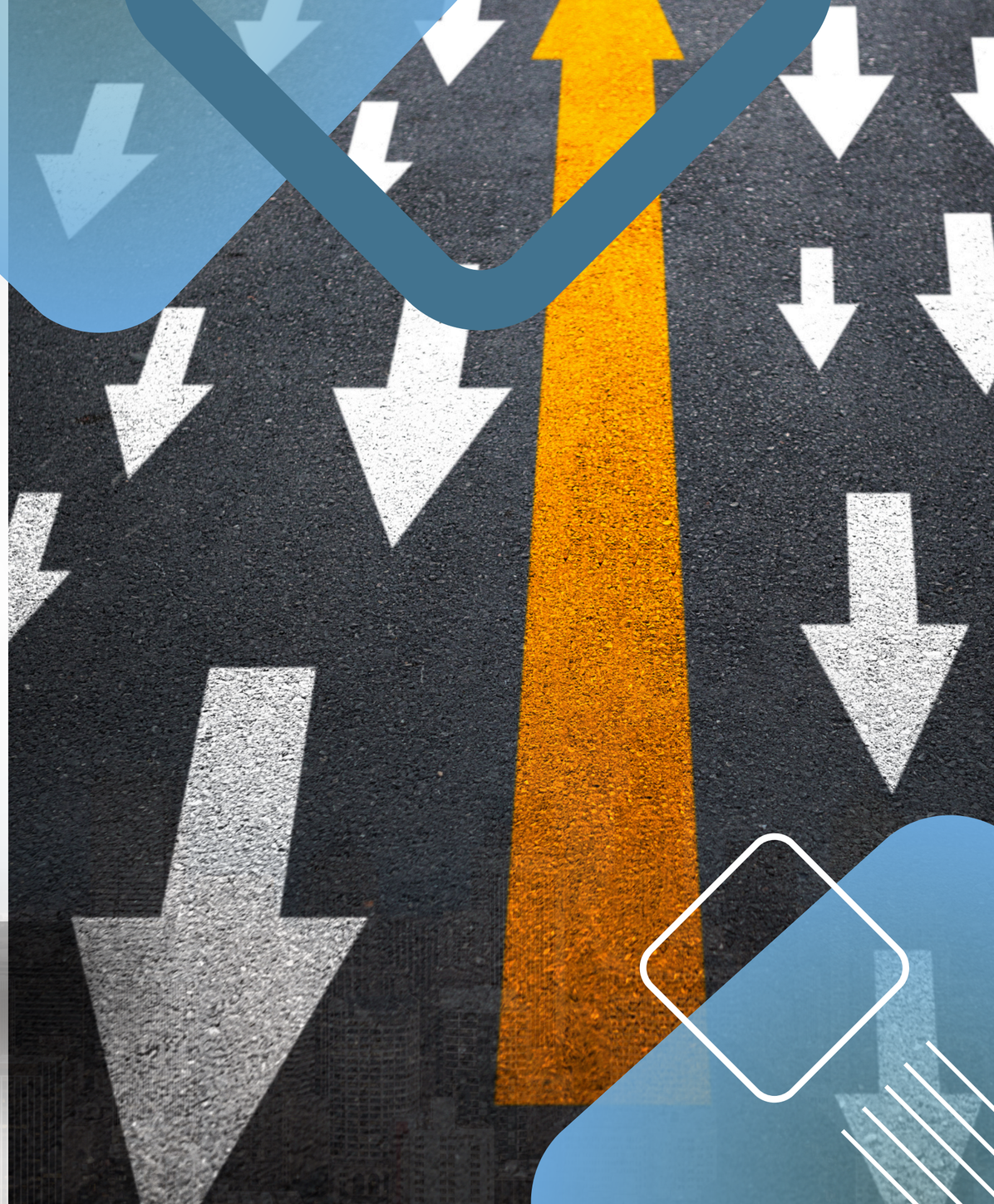


Take Aways



Take Aways

- Build relationships with your shareholders to include interdisciplinary collaboration
  - teachers, SLPs, PTs, APE, aides, administration
- Interdisciplinary approaches improve student outcomes and decrease workload
- Four Point Blueprint include
  - needs assessment
  - development using framework (KTA, CFIR)
  - design: adapt to adpot
  - interdisciplinary collaboration

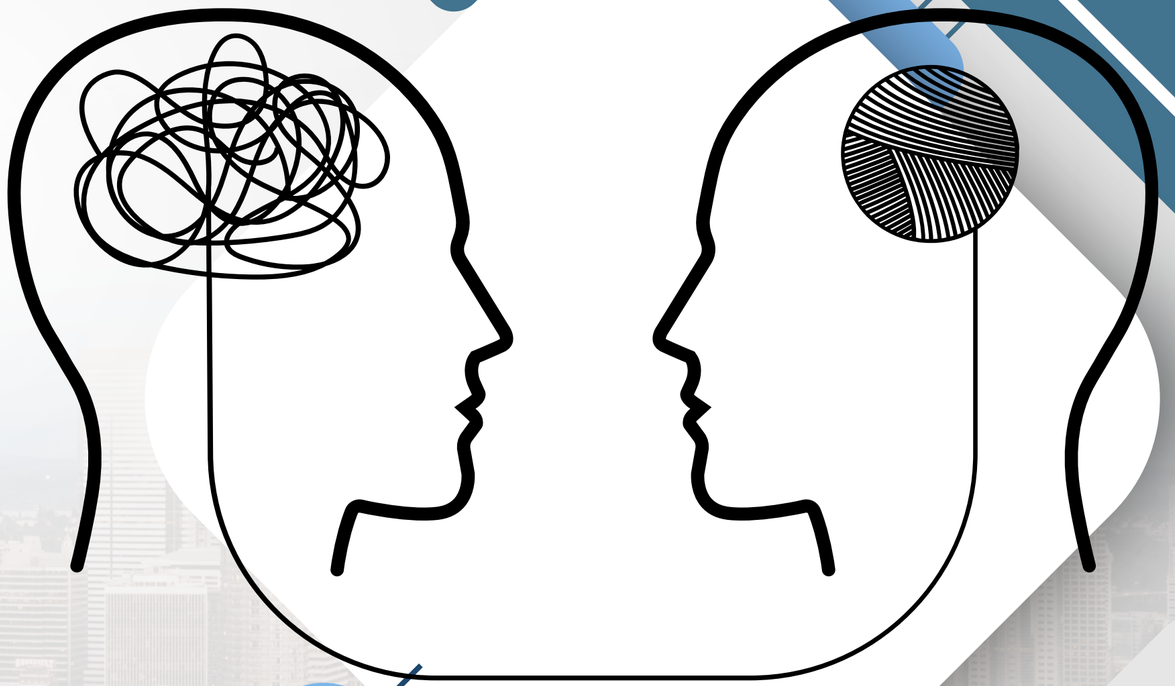


Lynch et al., 2023

Q&A Session



Thank you for your attention throughout the presentation



LET’S CONNECT!

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